The Characteristic of a Believer
From Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah
From Tabqaat Al-Hanaabelah 1/294-295
By: Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal
Translated by: Abu Muslimah

Muhammad ibn Habeeb Al-Andaaree narrates many things on the authority of our Imam. From among those things is an essay on the Sunnah.
He said: "I heard Ahmad ibn Hanbal say: The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is:

Whoever bears witness that no god has the right to be worshipped except Allah, He is alone without partners, and Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

He establishes all that the Prophets and Messengers have come with. He believes in his heart that which he manifests.

He does not doubt in his belief.

He does not make a disbeliever out of anyone from the people of tawheed because of a sin. But he delays what is unknown to him of the affairs to Allah 'Azza wa Jell. He entrusts his affairs with Allah 'Azza wa Jell. He does not guarantee safety from Allah for a sin.

He knows that everything is by the qadaa of Allah and His divine decree, the good, the bad, everything!

He hopes for the good doer of the Ummah of Muhammad and he fears for the one who does badly.

He does not place anyone from the Ummah of Muhammad in jannah or the fire because of some good or bad that was done, so that Allah 'Azza wa Jell He is the One to place His creation wherever He likes.

He knows the right of the salaf, those whom Allah has chosen to attend His Prophet.

He gives preference to Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmaan. He knows the right of 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib, Talhah, Az-Zubair, 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Owf, Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas, Sa'eed ibn Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufail over the rest of the Companions. Indeed, they are the nine who were with the Prophet on the mountain of Heraa when the Prophet said: "Be calm Heraa, because you have upon yourself a Prophet, a truthful one and a martyred. And the Prophet is the tenth of them.

He shows mercy on all of the Companions of Muhammad. The young from among them and the old. He speaks of their virtues and refrains from that which broke out among them.

The salaah of the two 'eeds, fear, jumu'ah, and the jamaa'ah with every ameer, whether he is righteous or wicked.

Wiping over the leather socks during travel and when not traveling.

Shortening during travel.

The Qur'aan is the speech of Allah and His revelation and it is not created.

Faith is a statement and an action. It increases and decreases.

Jihaad is ongoing since the time that Allah sent Muhammad up until the last group who will fight the Anti-Christ. They will not be harmed by the wrongdoing of the wrongdoer.

Buying and selling is permissible until the Day of Resurrection in accordance with the Book and the Sunnah.

Saying Allahu Akbar is four times over the funeral.

Supplication for piety is for the Imams of the Muslims. Do not revolt against them by the sword. Do not fight in fitnah and remain in your homes.

The belief in the punishment of the grave.

The belief in Munkar and Nakeer.

The belief in the Pool and the Intercession.

The belief that the people of Paradise will see their Lord The Blessed and Exalted.

The belief that those who profess the oneness of Allah will exit the fire after being burned, just as the hadeeth narrates these things on the authority of the Prophet.

We believe in the truth of them and we don't make any analogy with them.

This is what the scholars of all the cities have agreed upon.

The Explanation:
The Characteristic of a Believer From Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah

Muhammad ibn Habeeb Al-Andaaree narrates many things [saying about the deen] on the authority of our Imam [Ahmad ibn Hanbal]. From among those things is a essay [composition] on the Sunnah [the belief of the Muslim]. He [Muhammad ibn Habeeb Al-Andaaree] said: "I heard Ahmad ibn Hanbal [Abu Abdillaah Ahmad Ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal ibn Helaal Ash-Shaybaanee. He was born in Rabee' Al-Awwal, 164 hijrah and died on Jumu'ah, the 12th of Rabee' Al-Awwal, 241 hijrah. He was 77 years old] say: The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah [Those who adhere to the way of the Prophet Muhammad and that that is correct] is:

1. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is] Whoever bears witness that there is no god but Allah [no god has the right to be worshipped except Allah], He is alone without partners [in His god ship, His lordship, and His beautiful names and lofty characteristics] and Muhammad [ibn 'Abdullaah ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib ibn Haashim] is His slave and [Last Prophet and] Messenger [to all of humanity].

2. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is] He [who] establishes [believes firmly in] all that the Prophets and Messengers have come with [of guidance and revelation from their Lord]. He believes in his heart [sincerely and solely for the sake of Allah] that which he manifests [outwardly to the people].

3. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He does not doubt [waver, or is uncertain] in his belief [in Allah and His Messenger].

4. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He does not make a disbeliever [a kaafir] out of anyone [Muslim] from the people [believers in the] of towheed [the oneness in Allah] because of a sin [or act of disobedience to Allah and His Messenger that the Muslim committed]. But he postpones [defers making a judgment on]] what is unknown to him of the affairs [of himself or others] to Allah 'Azza wa Jell [The Mighty and Majestic, so that He alone can make the judgment. Isn't He the Most Just of those who make judgments?]. He entrusts [places the responsibility of the outcome of] his [own] affairs with Allah 'Azza wa Jell [with complete and total reliance and dependence upon Allah alone]. He does not guarantee [promise or assure anyone] safety from [the punishment of] Allah for a sin [or act of disobedience that one may have committed].

5. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He knows that everything [that happens] is by the qadaa [execution, performance, doing] of Allah and His divine [sacred] decree [predestination, the divine foreordaining of all that will happen], the good [of what happens], the bad [of what happens], everything [that has happened, is happening, and will happen up until the Last Hour]!
6. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He hopes for the good doer of the ummah of Muhammad ? [the Muslim who believes and performs righteous good deeds] and he fears for the one who does badly [the Muslim who does not believe correctly and/or does not performs righteous good deeds].
7. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He does not place anyone from the ummah of Muhammad [the Muslims] in paradise [jannah] or the fire [of hell] because of some good [deeds] or bad [deeds] that was done, so that Allah 'Azza wa Jell He [alone] is the One to place His creation [of jinn and mankind] wherever He likes. [Some in jannah and some in the fire. May Allah grant us jannah and save us from the fire.]
8. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He knows the right of [gives recognition, honors, pays respect to] the salaf, [who are] those whom Allah has chosen to be companions [those who saw the Prophet, believed in him, and died on Islaam] to His Prophet.
9. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He gives preference to Abu Bakr ['Abdullaah ibn 'Uthmaan Abu Quhaafah], 'Umar [ibn Al-Khattaab] and 'Uthmaan [ibn 'Affaan over the rest of the Companions]. He knows the right of [gives recognition, honors, pays respect to] 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib, Talhah [ibn 'Ubaidullaah], Az-Zubair [ibn Al-'Awwaam], 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Owf, Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas, Sa'eed ibn Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufail over the rest of the remaining] the Companions. Indeed [surely], they are the nine [Companions] who were with the Prophet [Muhammad] on the mountain of Heraa [in Makkaah] when the [Last] Prophet [and Messenger of Allah] said: "Be calm [still mountain of] Heraa, because you have nothing upon yourself except a Prophet, a truthful one [Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq] and a martyred ['Umar Al-Faarooq and 'Uthmaan Thun-Noorain]. And the Prophet is the tenth of them [who have been given glad tidings of jannah].
10. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] He shows mercy on all of the Companions of Muhammad. The young from among them [the Companions of Muhammad] and the old. He speaks of their virtues and refrains from that which broke out among them.
11. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] The salaah of the two 'eeds, fear, jumu'ah, and the jamaa'ah with every ameer, whether he is righteous or wicked.
12. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] Wiping over the leather socks during travel and when not traveling.
13. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] Shortening during travel.
14. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] The Qur'aan is the speech of Allah and His revelation and it is not created.
15. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] Faith is a statement and an action. It increases and decreases.
16. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] Jihaad is ongoing since the time that Allah sent Muhammad up until the last group who will fight the anti-christ. They will not be harmed by the wrongdoing of the wrongdoer.

17. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] Buying and selling is permissible until the Day of Resurrection in accordance with the Book and the Sunnah.
18. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] Saying Allahu akbar is four times over the funeral.
19. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] Supplication for piety is for the imams of the Muslims. Do not revolt against them by the sword. Do not fight in fitnah and remain in your homes.
20. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] The belief in the punishment of the grave.
21. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] The belief in Munkar and Nakeer.
22. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] The belief in the Pool and the Intercession.
23. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] The belief that the people of Paradise will see their Lord The Blessed and Exalted.
24. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] The belief that those who profess the oneness of Allah will exit the fire after being burned, just as the hadeeth narrates these things on the authority of the Prophet.
25. [The Characteristic of a Believer from Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that] We believe in the truth of them and we don't make any analogy with them.
26. This is what the scholars of all the cities have agreed upon.